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Submissions should comprise three parts: (1) A copy of the handouts or instructions that go to students. (2) An explanation of the exercise/ handout and of the principles behind it, addressed to future instructors who may use the material. (3) If possible, an example of a student response.

Submissions may range in length from one to four or five pages.

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Submissions are due in 101 McGraw Hall by Friday, December 10. No exceptions can be made.

Fall 2010 Knight Award for Writing Exercises

~Please Print Clearly~

Instructor's name KATHILA JANISZEWSKA

Department ENGLISH Course # and title 1105.102 WRITING AND SEXUAL POLITICS - ALL THE

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COLLABORATIVE WRITING EXERCISE - WORKING WITH QUOTATIONS
Title of Writing Exercises FROM THE HOUSE OF MIRTH

Instructor's signature Kathila Janiszewska Date 12/06/2010

Fall 2010 Knight Award for Writing Exercises and Handouts
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Course: English 1105.102 All the Single Ladies

**Collaborative Writing Exercise:
Working with Quotations from *The House of Mirth***

I proposed this exercise with three aims in mind: (1) to give students a chance to practice introducing quotations and integrating them with their argument, (2) to provide students with an opportunity to discuss their ideas about style and argument organization while working closely together on a piece of writing, (3) to comment on student writing in detail together with the whole group in a way that makes no one feel singled out for criticism.

The exercise took up two of the last sessions on Edith Wharton's novel *The House of Mirth*. During the first session, I divided the students into four groups and handed out the prompts. Groups 1 and 3 worked with the same prompt, as did groups 2 and 4. The prompts include two quotations from the novel and a set of questions whose aim was to help students draw connections between the quotations. The assignment asks the students to compose a paragraph that includes and discusses both quotations. While they were working, the students asked me if they could write two paragraphs instead of one; I agreed on the condition that the two paragraphs be clearly connected. I requested that the groups edit their paragraphs (using Google Documents if they were not able to meet in person) before submitting the final version to the discussion board on Blackboard.

I compiled a handout with the four submissions and asked the students to print out a copy for the next class. I decided to make a handout in order to facilitate editing (I increased the spacing between lines). We spent the second class session discussing the paragraphs in detail. I asked the students from each group to first comment on the composition process and the difficulties they encountered before asking the class to comment on the writing sentence by sentence.

When I talked with the students in individual conferences and at our last class, they described the exercise as challenging but very useful. Many of them said that the assignment clarified for them what it meant to introduce and discuss a quotation and how important these were for their arguments to be effective.

Attached:

- (1) assignment prompts (four groups, two groups working with the same prompt)
- (2) handout: paragraphs composed by the four groups

Assignment Prompts

Groups 1 and 3

Consider the following quotations:

“She had once picked up, in a house where she was staying, a translation of the *Eumenides*, and her imagination had been seized by the high terror of the scene where Orestes, in the cave of the oracle, finds his implacable huntress asleep, and snatches an hour's repose. Yes, the Furies might sometimes sleep, but they were there, always there in the dark corners, and now they were awake and the iron clang of their wings was in her brain...” (148)

“More and more, with every fresh mischance befalling her, did the pursuing furies seem to take the shape of Bertha Dorset; and close at hand, safely locked among her papers, lay the means of ending their pursuit.” (296)

What other references to the Furies do you remember from the novel? What are the Furies and why do they haunt Lily's imagination? How are the Furies connected to Lily's moral convictions and fears? Think together about an argument that could be made about the significance of the Furies and write a paragraph in which you formulate an argument and discuss the quotations. Remember that every quotation needs to be introduced and discussed.

Groups 2 and 4

Consider the following quotations:

“Lily was naturally proud of her mother's aptitude in this line: she had been brought up in the faith that, whatever it cost, one must have a good cook, and be what Mrs. Bart called “decently dressed.” Mrs. Bart's worst reproach to her husband was to ask if he expected her to ‘live like a pig’; and his replying in the negative was always regarded as a justification for cabling to Paris for an extra dress or two...” (30)

“Her eyes rested wonderingly on the thin shabby figure at her side. She had known Nettie Crane as one of the discouraged victims of over-work and anaemic parentage: one of the superfluous fragments of life destined to be swept prematurely into that social refuse heap of which Lily had so lately expressed her dread. But Nettie Struther's frail envelope was now alive with hope and energy...” (313)

What can you say about the connection between these two quotations? How can they inform our understanding of the novel's title? What other fragments of the novel do these two excerpts bring to mind? Think together about an argument that could be made about these excerpts and write a paragraph in which you formulate an argument and discuss the quotations. Remember that every quotation needs to be introduced and discussed.